MCI informs ministry about encroachments by foreign missions

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) has decided to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about encroachments made by a number of embassies in the Diplomatic Enclave.

An MCI official said that a recent survey conducted by the civic body revealed that around 30 embassies, foreign missions and international organisations have encroached upon state land or are using areas beyond their permitted limits.

"We will share the details of the survey with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," the official said, adding that the Foreign Office would take up the matter with the concerned embassies and international organisations.

The Diplomatic Enclave is a gated area in sector G-5 where embassies and foreign missions are located.

According to the official, foreign missions would be asked either to remove the encroachments or get them regularised through approval for the use of open spaces, where possible. He said almost all of the identified embassies were using green belts for parking purposes, while many had constructed small rooms on state land for various uses.

"As per protocol, we cannot initiate action without the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, we are informing the Foreign Office about these violations so that the issue can be taken up with the concerned embassies and international organisations," the official said.

PPP pays tribute to Z.A. Bhutto on 98th birth anniversary

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leaders paid homage to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and reaffirmed the resolve to carry forward his vision of a pro-poor, just and democratic Pakistan.

President Asif Ali Zardari said Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a towering statesman whose life and leadership profoundly shaped the destiny of Pakistan. He rose to become a defining figure in our nation's political history and remains an enduring source of inspiration.

He founded the PPP with a vision of justice, equality and empowerment for all citizens. Under his leadership, Pakistan adopted its first unanimously approved Constitution in 1973, a cornerstone of our parliamentary democracy and federal order, President Zardari said in his message on the 98th birth anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He championed the rights of the marginalised and gave voice to the voiceless. His reforms in land rights, labour protections and expansion of education and public services sought to widen opportunity and dignity for farmers, workers, women and the underprivileged.

"Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was also the main architect of Pakistan's nuclear programme, laying the foundation for our sovereign deterrent and long-term security. His statesmanship strengthened Pakistan's independent foreign policy and deepened relations with friendly nations, while hosting the historic 1974 Islamic Summit Conference that enhanced cooperation within the Muslim world".

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also paid a tribute to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, saying he was the enduring voice of Pakistan's dispossessed, oppressed and marginalised masses. Mr Bhutto bestowed dignity, identity and hope upon the people of Pakistan by introducing the revolutionary belief that power truly belongs to the people.

He said Bhutto's martyrdom failed to silence his ideas, which continue to inspire generations to stand firm against tyranny and injustice.

A VIEW of the Zero Point bridge illuminated with colourful lights on Sunday evening. — Online

Ring Road inspection soon before approval of revised PC-I

Punjab Planning and Development Board has made some observations over cost escalation and its team will visit the site, says official

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: A team from the Punjab Planning and Development Board will soon inspect the Rawalpindi Ring Road project before approving the revised PC-I, which has escalated its cost to Rs53 billion.

A senior official of Planning and Development Department told *Dawn* that the pre-Punjab Development Working Party (PDWP) was held last week and it made some observations on the revised PC-I.

He said three reasons were cited to escalate the cost of the project: hikes in the prices of construction material in the last three years, an increase in the width of bridges along with stone-pitching work to save the road from floods and the construction of toll plazas and Thalian Interchange remodeling on the motorway.

He said the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) also stated in the revised PC-I that the contract had been awarded to the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) on the basis of prices of construction material in the year 2022, but in the last three years a 40 per cent increase had been recorded in the prices.

He said the planning and development board made some observations on the revised PC-I and when the RDA insisted on adopting the changes the board decided to inspect the work after which the fate of the revised PC-I will be decided.

When contacted, RDA Director General Kinza Murtaza said that there were some observations made pre-PDWP held in Lahore last week and we will remove the objections and send it back in a week.

"The planning and development board team will also visit the project site and check the work done so far. It is a usual practice, when a project completes more than 70 per cent, teams visit the site and check new additions in the project," she said.

She said that the work was on a fast track and likely to complete in the stipulated time.

"Price escalation is routine in multi-billion projects and after the visit of Planning and Development Board team, the changes will be visible and they will better understand the urgency to add it," she said.

She said flood channels were added along Ring Road to protect it from flooding during the monsoon season and remodeling of Thalian Interchange was also necessary.

She said work on the interchanges, bridges and road asphalt had been started simultaneously so it would be completed as soon as possible. Apart from this, she said, work to establish an industrial zone along the Ring Road and shifting of bus stands and goods vehicle stands was also in progress.

It may be noted that the total length of the Ring Road is 38.3km. It will have five interchanges at Baanth, Chak Baili Khan, Adiala Road, Chakri Road and Thalian. An industrial zone will be established around the Ring Road.

Fog, cold wave grip Rawalpindi, Islamabad

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Fog, clouds and a cold wave gripped the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Sunday, while the Met Office forecast clearer weather on Monday morning.

Residents woke up to a foggy morning on Sunday, but the fog cleared early in the day, although clouds remained over the horizon throughout. The chilly conditions forced many people to stay indoors and spend the weekend in warm homes.

There was some confusion among residents over whether the conditions were due to fog or cloud cover. However, a Met Office official clarified that fog developed late Saturday night in Rawalpindi and Islamabad and persisted until early Sunday morning.

"The fog recorded in the twin cities was at around 700 metres and was not dense. However, cloudy weather prevailed throughout the day and remained until night," she said.

She added that weather conditions were likely to clear on Monday, although there were chances of drizzle in some parts of Rawalpindi and Islamabad during the night between Sunday and Monday.

The official said the cold weather would persist, with chilly winds expected to affect the twin cities over the next couple of days. "In Islamabad, a temperature of 7 degrees Celsius was recorded. During cloudy conditions, the minimum temperature usually increases, but once the weather clears, temperatures are likely to drop further," she explained.

She said continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country.

"Cold and dry weather is expected in most regions, while very cold conditions will prevail in hilly areas during morning and night hours. Moderate to dense fog is expected in Punjab, upper Sindh and the plain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," she said.

According to the Met Office, the lowest temperature in the country was recorded in Leh at minus 11 degrees Celsius. Temperatures in Gupis and Kalat fell to minus 5 degrees, while Skardu and Astore recorded minus 4 degrees. Parachinar, Malam Jabba and Hunza reported minus 3 degrees, while Kalam, Quetta and Rawalakot recorded minus 2 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, medical practitioners advised citizens to avoid staying outdoors during foggy conditions, particularly asthma patients. They said children and elderly people should be kept warm to protect them from pneumonia, as respiratory infections can become a serious health concern during cold and foggy weather.

Doctors warned that the risk of pneumonia and other severe respiratory illnesses doubles during foggy conditions and urged citizens to remain indoors whenever possible.

Separately, a spokesperson for the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) said visibility on various sections of motorways remained low on Sunday due to dense fog, particularly in central Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. He urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel during adverse weather conditions.

Motorists were also advised to strictly follow traffic safety rules issued by the NH&MP and to use fog lights while driving in foggy conditions.

Kashmir issue must be resolved under UN resolutions: Ayaz Sadiq

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday said resolution of Kashmir issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions is essential for lasting peace.

In a message on Kashmir Right to Self-Determination Day, Mr Sadiq said granting people of Kashmir their fundamental and inalienable right to self-determination is both a moral and legal obligation of the international community.

He emphasised that the Kashmir issue remains the unfinished agenda of the partition of the subcontinent, and that its just and durable resolution, in line with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, is indispensable for establishing lasting regional peace.

The speaker said for more than seven decades, the people of Kashmir have been struggling for their legitimate cause in the light of UN resolutions, yet justice has not been delivered to them. He recalled that on January 5, 1949, the United Nations Security Council adopted a historic resolution granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to determine their future through a free and impartial plebiscite.

Unfortunately, he added, the resolution remains unimplemented to this day.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, in his message on Kashmir Right to Self-Determination Day, said freedom struggle of the Kashmiris stands as a shining example of unparalleled sacrifices, perseverance and resilience, which deserve due recognition at the global level.

Motorcyclists topped list for traffic rule violations in 2025

Traffic police say its aim is not to issue challans but to protect lives and property of citizens

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: A total of 11,13245 tickets were issued for traffic rules violations in the year 2025 with motorcyclists topping the list.

"Law enforcement increased by 44 per cent in 2025 compared to 2024," a spokesman for the city traffic police said on Sunday.

He said that following the orders of Deputy Inspector General of Traffic Police Punjab Mohammad Waqas Nazir and Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Farhan Aslam, the traffic police issued a total of 1,13,245 tickets in 2025 to ensure traffic law enforcement.

Motorcyclists topped the list of traffic law violations. More than 653,000 challan tickets were issued to motorcyclists. The highest number of challans were issued for driving without a driving licence (213,263), 204,026 for driving without a helmet and 11,13,245 for driving recklessly and carelessly. As many as 99,694 challans were issued for violation of lane and zebra crossing, 71,849 for violation of line lane and zebra crossing.

Likewise, 56,556 challans were issued for obstructing the flow of traffic, 38,906 for driving under the age of 18 while 418,951 challans were issued for other serious violations.

More than 1,300 traffic police officers and personnel are on duty in Rawalpindi district. There was a 44pc increase in law enforcement in 2025 compared to 2024.

In 2025, special campaigns were launched against helmets, without driving licences and underage drivers, because of which 88pc of motorcyclists across the district started using helmets, while a record 328,000 driving licences were issued to citizens. Two mobile licensing vans were also added to facilitate citizens in remote areas.

The traffic police claimed a significant decrease in fatal accidents in 2025 compared to 2024. Motorcyclists were the main cause of accidents on the roads.

Chief Traffic Officer Farhan Aslam said that this year too, the traffic police will continue to take action against law-breaking elements to make the highways accident-free, ensure implementation of traffic rules and achieve organised traffic. Our aim is not to issue challans but to protect the lives and property of citizens.

The traffic police focus more on road safety and traffic education. Challans are issued only for serious violations of traffic rules to reform citizens. Citizens should also protect their lives and prove themselves as good citizens by following traffic rules to achieve an organized society.

Meanwhile, The City Traffic Police Murree released an annual performance report regarding issuance of driving licences.

A spokesman said that under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer Murree Imran Razaq, the Murree driving licence centre provided timely, transparent and quality facilities to the public. All stages were completed in a modern and systematic manner to ensure the convenience of citizens and the rule of law.

A total of 22,202 citizens were provided with various licensing facilities which included issuance of 9922 driving licences, 14 international licences, 12266 learning driving licences besides 771 regular and renewal driving licences.

He said that in addition, 461 commercial (LTV) driving licences were also issued in 2025.

A GARDENER waters saplings at a nursery in Islamabad's H-9 sector. — Photo by Mohammad Asim